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SUBJECT: UNION DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION INITIATIVE EXPANDS TO  
HERMOSILLO

REF: (A) MEXICO 4114 (B) MEXICO 5367

¶11. SUMMARY: In early November AmConsul Hermosillo and Embassy Mexico City's Labor Counselor met with officials from the CTM, Mexico's largest labor federation, and with various levels of GOM and NGO officials to discuss the problem of drug abuse in the workplace. This initiative, which is the outgrowth of talks between Mission Labor Counselor and the CTM on potential areas of increased cooperation between the union and the USG, began in mid-2007.

At that time AmConsul Matamoros enthusiastically embraced the idea of hosting a meeting to discuss ways to prevent drug abuse in the workplace as a way to further promote the commitment made by Presidents Bush and Calderon in March 2007 to increase US/Mexico border cooperation. A first meeting on the topic was ultimately held at AmConsul Matamoros, offices in July and since then follow-up meetings have occurred in both Matamoros and Mexico City. This initial meeting in Hermosillo was more widely attended than the first similar meeting in Matamoros and, perhaps as a consequence, was much more cautious in setting goals and objectives. The participants at the Hermosillo meeting were very concerned about the sustainability of any actions the group might jointly decide to take. A great deal of discussion was devolved to the severity and consequences of the problem of drug abuse in Hermosillo area to an assessment of what the group could realistically do to address this situation. At the conclusion of these discussions the group agreed to take the concerns raised to their respective home offices and then to meet again on December 6. END SUMMARY.

AMCONSUL HERMOSILLO JOINS DISCUSSION ON PROBLEMS OF DRUG ABUSE

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¶12. On November 6, AmConsul Hermosillo effectively joined the effort which began this past July in Matamoros to work together with the CTM, Mexico's largest labor federation, to attempt to address the problems of drug abuse in the workplace. This initiative of joint USG and union cooperation began in July of 2007 when AmConsul Matamoros hosted an exploratory meeting (REF A) to discuss the severity of the problem and possible common actions to help deal with this situation. As a result of that first meeting in Matamoros the consulate there has begun working with the union and the area's business community to develop

strategies that would draw primarily on local resources.

¶3. This initial meeting in Hermosillo was much different than the first similar meeting in Matamoros in that it was more widely attended. A broad range of Mexican government officials attended the Hermosillo meeting from both the federal and state level as well as representatives from NGOs and specialized agencies with experience in dealing with the problems of drug abuse. The USG was represented at this meeting by AmConsul Hermosillo,s Principal officer, its Labor Watcher and Mission Mexico,s Labor Counselor. The most senior GOM official present appeared to be a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE).

¶4. The some of the participants at the November 6 meeting were as follows:

Representative from Sonora office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE);  
Representatives from Director of the Public Security Secretariat,s (SSP) Crime Prevention Office;

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Representatives from Sonora office of Secretariat of Labor (STPS);  
Representatives from the Director General of the Center for Youth Integration (CIJ, a parastatal agency affiliated with the Secretariat of Health);  
Representatives from Secretariat of Health (SS);  
Deputy Secretary General, CTM Sonora;  
Representatives from the CTM,s National HQ;

NO INTEREST IN A PHOTO OP

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¶5. From the very start of the Hermosillo meeting its participants made clear that they were not interested in becoming involved in an exercise that would amount to little more than a photo opportunity. This sentiment was first stated by the deputy head of the CTM,s Hermosillo, Sonora office and then quickly echoed by others in attendance. The meeting then began to touch on the severity of the problems in Mexico,s northwestern state of Sonora and the difficulty of taking on an initiative to combat this dilemma that would be truly sustainable. Considerable discussion was devoted to the complexity of helping people who are already drug abuser and to the impact of drug abuse on family members who are not drug users and on the broader community.

¶6. When the meeting turned to possible concrete first steps the discussion focused on such things as the pros and cons of different types of treatment as opposed prevention strategies. The CTM representative from the union,s national office in Mexico City spoke at length about resources and commitments the union had already obtained to devote the drug prevention initiative. The SRE representative voiced her agency,s general support for the goals of the overall initiative but made clear that at this point, despite being perhaps the most senior GOM federal official at the meeting, her purpose in attending was to record the details of the discussion and then relay them to higher level SRE officials in Mexico City.

¶7. Later in the meeting AmConsul Hermosillo,s PO drew on his experiences serving at posts in EAP to help guide the discussion with regard to actions that produce desired results and those that sound nice but are often less than effective. He noted that he had personally seen how methamphetamines were rapidly and severely addictive, and caused largely irreversible mental damage and violent behavior. Methamphetamine use appeared to be on the rise in Sonora and Sinaloa, states within the Hermosillo consular district, because narco-traffickers were using it to pay off

small couriers, who began to sell it locally. School children were being targeted and street crime and home break-ins appeared to be increasing as a consequence. The growth of this part of Mexico as a methamphetamine market, not simply a transit point, was occurring in an environment of deep ignorance about the drug itself. Even local law enforcement appeared to have trouble identifying the drug and seemed unaware of its dangers. Better education about methamphetamines was urgently needed throughout society, and could be especially effective in the workplace.

¶ 8. This was then followed up by a presentation/summary of a tentative agreement reached after a meeting in Mexico City (REF B) to adopt a how-to manual developed by Mexico's National Institute of Psychiatry (INP) as the focus of efforts to combat workplace drug abuse. The INP manual, entitled Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace: A Manual for Prevention provides step-by-step instructions for developing a drug abuse prevention program. As in the discussions in Mexico City the goal of this part of the meeting was to accept the INP manual as a common guide for all actors interested in addressing the problem of drug abuse in the workplace so that everyone involved would be starting from the same place and following a shared plan of action.

WE NEED TO DISCUSS THIS WITH HQ  
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¶ 9. One of the major points that became clear be the end of the Hermosillo meeting was the complexity of developing a sustainable program that could successfully address the difficulties drug abuse in general and in the workplace in particular. All of the participants of the Hermosillo meeting expressed their support for the initiative but most (of the federal GOM officials at least) felt that it was necessary to relate the details of gathering,s discussion to their respective head quarters before committing themselves to any next steps. Consequently, it was agreed that all of the participants should be given an opportunity to review the details of the meeting with their head offices and that a follow up meeting would be held in Hermosillo on December 6

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report on and/or coordinate and decisions reached back in their HQs.

COMMENT  
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¶ 10. The general tone of this initial Hermosillo meeting was one of studied caution. One reason for this was probably the number and variety of the participants at the meeting but it also was probably a result of a realistic assessment of the size of the problem under discussion. That said, the meeting,s participants seemed to genuinely understand the need for some sort of concerted action and sooner rather than later. Hopefully the follow-up meeting in December will get the drug abuse prevention initiative off to a sound start in the Hermosillo consular district and further build on the budding USG/union cooperation.

¶ 11. THIS MESSAGE WAS CLEARED WITH AMCONSUL HERMOSILLO.

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